

UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION

NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the 4th April, 2025

University Grants Commission (Recognition and Grant of Equivalence to Qualifications Obtained From Foreign Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2025

F. No. 1-9/2023(Equivalence).—Whereas, the role of the University Grants Commission in the internationalisation of the Indian education system has increased manifold in the wake of India's renewed thrust on academic collaboration with foreign countries and in the context of the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, and as a background, University Grants Commission issued the Guidelines for Internationalisation of Education in July, 2021 which enumerate a wide array of activities such as internationally relevant curricula, the brand building of Indian Educational Institutions abroad, academic and research collaboration with foreign universities, credit recognition under twinning arrangements, a global citizenship approach, and engaging with foreign alumni;

And whereas, the University Grants Commission has notified regulations on Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Higher Educational Institutions to offer Twinning, Joint Degree, and Dual Degree Programmes, 2022 and it has also evolved the National Higher Education Qualifications Framework which is an instrument for the classification and recognition of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved and it is expected that the mobility of students will be greatly enhanced as a result of these reforms;

And whereas, there is a need for a more comprehensive and effective education system incorporating general (academic), vocational, and experiential learning and this integration will encompass relevant experiences and proficiency levels, with vertical and horizontal mobility for students at all levels, including School and Higher Education;

And whereas, to facilitate this vision, the National Credit Framework has also been devised as an inclusive meta-framework, seamlessly unifying the credits acquired through school education, higher education, vocational, and skill education; which serves as an instrumental tool for classifying and recognising qualifications based on specific criteria for the achieved level of learning;

And whereas, in furtherance of the above, and to enable the smooth mobility of students, a robust and transparent mechanism for recognising foreign qualifications and granting equivalence to such qualifications at both school and higher education levels is deemed necessary, which will be overseen by the University Grants Commission.

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by clauses (f) and (g) of sub-section (1) of section 26 read with clause (j) of section 12 of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956, the University Grants Commission hereby makes the following regulations, namely:

1. Short title, application, and commencement. – (1) These regulations may be called the University Grants Commission (Recognition and Grant of Equivalence to Qualifications obtained from Foreign Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2025.

(2) They shall not apply to professional qualifications awarded by foreign educational institutions in disciplines such as Medicine, Pharmacy, Nursing, Law, and Architecture and such other qualifications regulated by the norms of respective Statutory Councils in India.

(3) They shall come into force on the date of their publication in the Official Gazette.

2. Definitions. – (1) In these regulations, unless the context otherwise requires, -

- (a) “Act” means the University Grants Commission Act, 1956 (3 of 1956);
- (b) “Board” means a Board or a Body duly authorised or recognised and established to direct and administer the primary and secondary schools in a town, city, county, or state of the Foreign Country;
- (c) “Equivalence Certificate” means a document certifying the parity of a qualification in terms of level between a foreign qualification and the qualification awarded at that level by the Indian Board or Universities;
- (d) “Fee” means the application processing fee payable by the students while applying for an Equivalence Certificate;
- (e) “Foreign Educational Institution” means an educational institution recognised and established or incorporated in any legal manner such as trust or society or company or statutory body or other legal

forms in the country of its origin and is recognised or authorised to offer academic or research programmes at the school and higher education levels, within and outside its home jurisdiction, as the case may be;

- (f) “Franchising” means and includes the practice of allowing any person or institution, or organisation, other than the Educational Institution, to award degrees, and the terms “franchise” and “franchisee” shall be construed accordingly;
- (g) “qualification” means a certificate, diploma, or degree awarded by a competent authority such as a Board or University in recognition of the attainment by students of the expected learning outcomes on the successful completion of a particular programme of study;
- (h) “Review Committee” means a committee of experts constituted by the Commission to examine the applications requesting for review;
- (i) “School” means a school, recognised and established or incorporated by any legal manner in a foreign country to impart school education;
- (j) “Standing Committee” means a committee of experts constituted by the Commission to examine equivalence on case to case basis;
- (k) “Statutory Council” means a body established or incorporated under a Central Act to regulate standards of general and professional programme of study and award of degrees in a specified field;
- (l) “Student” means any person attending or seeking to enroll in an educational institution.

(2) Words and expressions used in these regulations and not defined, but defined in the Act, shall have the same meanings respectively assigned to them in the Act.

3. Conditions of recognition and grant of equivalence to qualifications obtained from Foreign Educational Institutions.—(1) A Qualification from a Foreign Educational Institution shall be recognised for grant of the equivalence certificate, subject to the following, namely: -

- (a) the qualification has been awarded by a Foreign Educational Institution that is duly recognised under the relevant laws in force in its home country;
- (b) the applicant for grant of equivalence has pursued the programme of study leading to the qualification in accordance with the norms and standards specified by such Foreign Educational Institution;
- (c) the entry-level requirements for admission to such programme of study are similar to that of a corresponding programme of study in India.

(2) The Standing Committee shall decide that whether the requirements referred to in clause (c) of sub regulations (1) are similar or not, in accordance with the procedure laid down for that purpose, and shall be based on the following considerations, namely:-

- (a) the minimum duration specified in respect of that programme of study and in case, the minimum duration of the programme of study is at variance, the similarity shall be assessed in terms of the minimum credit requirements under the two programmes and a variation of up to ten per cent of the normalised credit requirements may be considered permissible for computing such similarity;
- (b) the minimum credit requirements of that programme of study, taking into account-
 - (i) the requirement with respect to the basic background courses, disciplinary core courses, disciplinary elective courses, cross-disciplinary courses, and laboratory courses;
 - (ii) the components contributing to the determination of the minimum credit, such as, the number of contact hours per week, the number of hours specified for self-study and the quantum of experiential learning;
- (c) the process of evaluation under the programme of study, including evaluation of the thesis or dissertation where the same is a component of that programme of study;
- (d) the requirement of a thesis, project, internship, other hands-on or experiential learning under the programme of study, if the corresponding programme of study offered in India mandates such a requirement;
- (e) the equivalence in terms of the curricular outcomes as determined in respect of the curriculum pertaining to the basic background courses, disciplinary core courses, disciplinary elective courses, cross-disciplinary courses, laboratory courses and such other courses under the respective programme.

(3) A qualification obtained from the Off-Shore Campus of a Foreign Educational Institution shall be recognised for grant of the equivalence certificate, subject to the following, namely: -

- (a) the Off-Shore Campus has been approved by the competent authority in country where the campus is situated as well as in the country of origin where the main campus of the Foreign Educational Institution is located;
- (b) the academic programme offered at the Off-Shore Campus complies with the requirements of accreditation in the country where such Off-Shore Campus is located, as well as any such requirements in the country of origin of the Foreign Educational Institution.

(4) A qualification obtained from any campus or institution under or through a Franchising arrangement shall not be considered for recognition for the purposes of grant of equivalence.

(5) A qualification obtained from a School situated in a foreign country shall be accepted for determining equivalence for the purpose of admission to undergraduate and equivalent programmes of study in a higher educational institution in India, subject to the following, namely:-

- (a) the system of school education prevailing in the foreign country is being considered at present for admissions to undergraduate education by Universities and other higher educational institutions in India, as being equivalent to schooling imparted by schools in India under the State Boards of Secondary Education, the Central Board of Secondary Education or the Council for Indian School Certificate Examinations; or
- (b) the applicant has undergone School education for at least twelve years through a mode accepted by the higher education system of the relevant foreign country for admission to the undergraduate level, had the student continued to pursue higher education in that country; and
- (c) the School where the student was imparted education, as well as the school-leaving examination thereafter, has been recognised by the relevant Board in the foreign country.

(6) Any other conditions as may be decided by the Commission from time to time:

Provided that having regard to the high academic or research reputation of a Foreign Higher Educational Institution which is evidenced by its standing in internationally recognised rankings of higher education institutions, the Commission may relax one or more of the considerations for the grant of Equivalence.

4. Procedure for granting equivalence. – (1) The Commission shall maintain a dedicated online portal to receive applications for the grant of equivalence certificate to qualifications obtained from foreign educational institutions.

- (2) The applicant shall submit an application online, along with such fee as may be specified by the Commission, from time to time.
- (3) In case the required documents are in a language other than English or a Scheduled Indian Language, the applicant must submit a transcript in English, duly authenticated by the degree awarding institution.
- (4) The Commission shall refer the application for examination by a Standing Committee to be nominated by it; and the committee shall consist of persons who shall be experts in the field of education in general, and higher education in particular.
- (5) The Commission may permit the Standing Committee to co-opt, temporarily and from time to time, such other experts whose association may specifically benefit the Committee in the discharge of its functions.
- (6) The Standing Committee may devise its own procedures for its meetings and for the examination of an application and its recommendation thereon shall be made available to the Commission, as soon as may be, but not later than ten working days from the date of receipt of the application from the Commission and the recommendation shall clearly state the grounds for acceptance or rejection, as the case may be.
- (7) The Commission shall communicate to the applicant, its decision based on the recommendation made by the Standing Committee, regarding the acceptance or rejection of the application and in any case, not later than fifteen working days from the date of initial receipt of the application from the applicant.
- (8) In case, the Standing Committee recommends and concurs with acceptance of the application for recognition of equivalence of a programme, an equivalence certificate to that effect shall be issued and made available by the Commission on the portal.
- (9) In case, the Standing Committee is of the opinion that the information furnished by the applicant is insufficient, and additional information or document, is required by it to make its recommendations, it shall convey the status to the Commission, and shall ask the applicant to furnish the same to the Commission within a further period of fifteen working days, and the time-limit for conveying the recommendation by the Committee and for communicating the decision on the application, shall stand extended, accordingly.

- (10) In case, the applicant is not satisfied with the decision, the applicant shall be entitled to make a representation to the Commission for a review of its decision of rejection, within thirty working days from the date of receipt of the communication referred to in sub-regulation (7), along with such fee for the filing of the review as the Commission may specify.
- (11) The Commission shall cause to place the application for review before a Review Committee to be constituted by it.
- (12) The Review Committee shall consist of such number of experts, familiar with the issues raised in the application for review, as the Commission may consider necessary to assist it to arrive at a fair and objective review of its decision, and the Review Committee may devise its own procedures.
- (13) The Review Committee shall make its recommendation, along with reasons for acceptance or rejection of the application for review, as soon as may be, but not later than ten working days from the date of the reference made to it under sub-regulation (11).
- (14) On receipt of the recommendation of the Review Committee, the Commission shall communicate to the applicant, its final decision in review stating the reasons for rejection or acceptance as the case may be, not later than fifteen working days from the date of receipt of the original application for review.
- (15) Where the application in review is accepted by the Commission, an equivalence certificate to that effect shall be issued and made available on the online portal.

5. Miscellaneous. – (1) The student is not required to apply for grant of equivalence certificate, if he has obtained a Qualification, -

- (a) from a Foreign Educational Institution under a collaborative arrangement in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding or an agreement between the Government of India or University Grants Commission and the Government of a foreign country where the Qualification awarding institute is located; or
- (b) under the provisions of the University Grants Commission (Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Higher Educational Institutions to offer Twinning, Joint Degree and Dual Degree Programmes) Regulations, 2022 or the University Grants Commission (Setting up and Operation of campuses of Foreign Higher Educational Institutions in India) Regulations, 2023; or
- (c) under the provisions of any other regulations issued by the University Grants Commission.
- (2) In case, the student referred to in sub-regulation (1) applies for grant of equivalence certificate, the University Grants Commission may consider for granting of the said certificate on payment of specified fee without reference to the Standing Committee.
- (3) The equivalence certificate issued under these regulations shall be valid for all academic institutions, colleges, institutions deemed to be universities and universities, coming under the purview of the Commission, for the purposes of pursuing higher education and research; and for the purposes of employment in all public or other bodies wherein an educational qualification recognised by the Commission has been specified as essential.
- (4) If, at any stage after the issue of the equivalence certificate, it comes to the notice of the Commission that the applicant has obtained the same under these regulations on the basis of false information or fraud in any other manner, the Commission shall have the power to withdraw such Certificate, in addition to initiating appropriate proceeding as per law against such applicant.

6. Interpretation. (1) Any question as to the interpretation of these regulations shall be decided by the Commission.

(2) The Commission shall have the power to issue clarifications, to remove any doubt, difficulty, or anomaly which may arise while implementing these regulations.

Prof. MANISH R. JOSHI, Secy.

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